

# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY





# THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600 28 March 1966

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State Dept. review completed



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#### HIGHLIGHTS

The major cities of I Corps as well as Saigon were generally free of public demonstrations today, but there is no indication that political unrest has abated. Antigovernment attacks are still being broadcast over the Hue radio station, accusing the Ky administration of being a US "puppet."

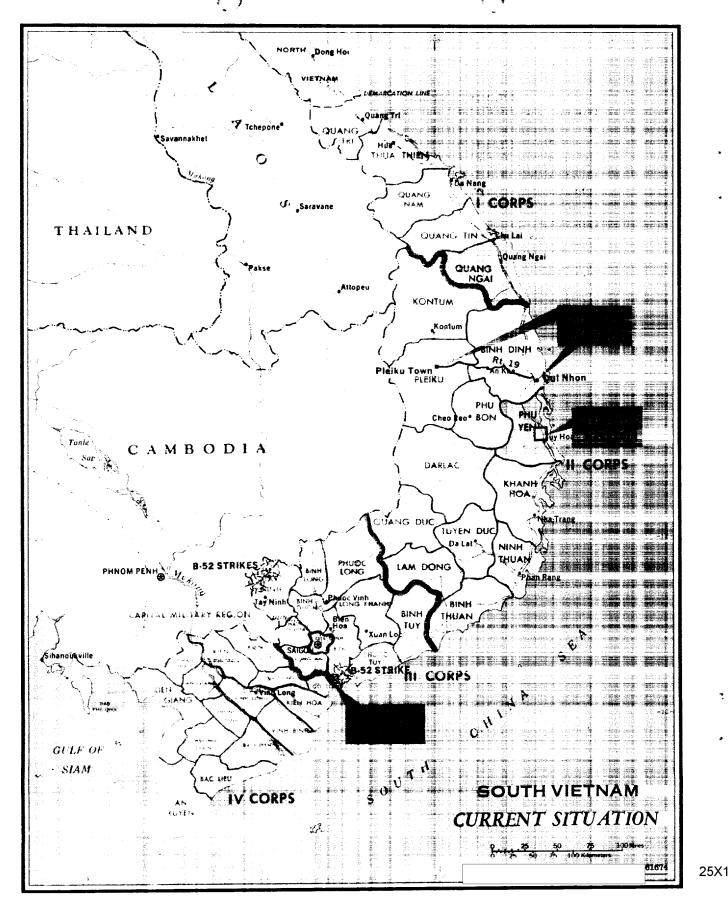
- I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: US/FW/GVN ground forces engage in sporadic contact with the Viet Cong (Paras. 1-3). US Marines operating near the Saigon River are supported by a B-52 strike; other attacks hit War Zone "C" (Paras. 4-5). The Viet Cong radio has announced a temporary suspension of attacks against ethnic Cambodians in South Vietnam during a Cambodian holiday (Para. 6). Viet Cong psywar leaflets are aimed at US troops in Quang Ngai Province (Para. 7).
- Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon are outwardly calm today, but there is no indication that the "struggle movement" against the government is abating; the mayor of Da Nang has implied that the agitation will end only if Buddhist monk Tri Quang agrees to Premier Ky's proposed solution (Paras. 1-4). An "order of the day" has been issued to the Vietnamese to observe discipline (Para. 5). The papal delegate has deplored the recent attack on the Ky government by a Vietnamese priest and asserts that this does not represent an official Catholic position (Para. 6). The special anticorruption court in Saigon is reportedly trying six government officials accused of economic crimes (Para. 7).
- III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. Communist I The Action From	unist Military Developments: significance to report.  Political Developments: Presence nt delegation at the Soviet party Hanoi's control over the NFLSV  participated in the general reations which has been going on ary (Para. 3). Peking is carelaying any irritation over Hanoi's oscow congress, announcing that n had held "intimate talks" with m 22 to 25 March (Para. 4).
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#### I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

- 1. US, Free World, and GVN forces continue to press the initiative in areas of suspected Viet Cong concentrations, but no major contact has been reported.
- 2. Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division claimed 270 Viet Cong killed in the month-long search-and-destroy Operation HARRISON in Phu Yen Province, which ended on 24 March.
- 3. One ARVN and two US battalions are providing security on Route 19 from Pleiku to Qui Nhon in Operation BUCHANAN. No contact has been reported.
- 4. The US Marine battalion operating along the main waterway to Saigon (Operation JACK STAY) received support from three B-52 Stratofortresses which struck a suspected Viet Cong base area yesterday 16 nautical miles from Saigon. The pilot of a spotter plane noted several secondary explosions, one of which was reportedly a Viet Cong mine factory blowing up. The marines are following up the raid.
- 5. A suspected Viet Cong command headquarters and a suspected training center were the targets of other B-52 strikes in northwestern Tay Ninh Province yesterday.

## Viet Cong Activity

- 6. An appeal to ethnic Cambodians was broadcast by the Viet Cong radio on 25 March. The Viet Cong said that for a three-day period from 13 April to 15 April, in honor of a Cambodian festival, they will not attack posts or mobile units composed of Khmer troops.
- 7. Sophisticated Viet Cong psywar leaflets are being directed at US Marine units in Quang Ngai Province, according to officers of the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force. The leaflets, written in good English, stress the hardships of military life and cite "antiwar" demonstrations in the United States.

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#### II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

- 1. There continues to be no indication that the political unrest is abating, although the major cities of I Corps as well as Saigon were generally free of public agitation today. Press reports indicate that the government is continuing to consult with its critics, and that officials of the Unified Buddhist Association in Saigon were to meet with Premier Ky today.
- 2. In Hue, the local radio continues to broadcast attacks on the national government, labeling it a US "puppet" and calling for its replacement. Hue radio today also carried a rebuttal of Premier Ky's speech of 26 March. The statement rejected Ky's contention that the antigovernment "struggle" was creating political, economic, and military conditions advantageous to the Viet Cong, and declared that the reason for the "struggle" was the military government's inability to solve such problems.
- Conditions in Da Nang were almost normal today except for continued closure of schools. mayor of the city, a Thi supporter who appears to be sympathetic to the antigovernment movement, told the US consul that there would probably be no more strikes in Da Nang because they are harmful to the people. This would seem to confirm reports of rising prices in Da Nang and complaints of hardship from cyclodrivers and other workers. The mayor commented that the "struggle" was not over, but implied that if Thich Tri Quang, the powerful monk from central Vietnam, were to accept the government's proposal regarding a constitutional committee, the struggle movement would end. He refused to comment on whether acceptance of Premier Ky's formula by the Buddhist Institute in Saigon would have the same effect.
- 4. Saigon was also outwardly quiet today, but the US Embassy reports that students at Saigon University appear to be under continuing Buddhist pressure

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to hold demonstrations and are becoming extremely sensitive to contacts with Americans.

- 5. The Saigon press today carried an "order of the day," dated 26 March, to the armed forces from the chief of the Joint General Staff, General Vien. The order includes a warning that the Viet Cong "are now seeking to infiltrate our ranks to sow division and disturbance," and appeals to all troops to observe strict military discipline. The issue of military participation in antigovernment activity and the need for firmer discipline was reportedly discussed at the Directorate meeting on 25 March.
- 6. Ambassador Lodge has discussed with the papal delegate, Archbishop Palmas, the recent attack on the Ky government by Father Hoang Quynh, a leader among Vietnamese Catholics who fled North Vietnam. Palmas deplored the attack, which he said did not represent his own views nor those of the Catholic diocese in Saigon. He indicated that he was planning to urge the Vietnamese bishop of Saigon to make a statement dissociating himself from Quynh's position.
- According to the press, the South Vietnamese special court for economic crimes went into session today to take up the cases of six government employees accused of accepting bribes to protect dishonest businessmen. Earlier, it was reported that, because more significant cases were pending, Premier Ky was recommending clemency for a former provincial treasurer recently sentenced to death by the court. Over the weekend, three prominent figures of the former Diem regime received relatively mild sentences for financial profiteering, and last week, a policeman, who a year ago shot a Buddhist demonstrator, received a three-year sentence. The victim, a young girl, has become a "martyr" in the present "struggle movement." Students in Da Nang today reportedly prevented the opening of local courts in protest over the mild sentence given the policeman.

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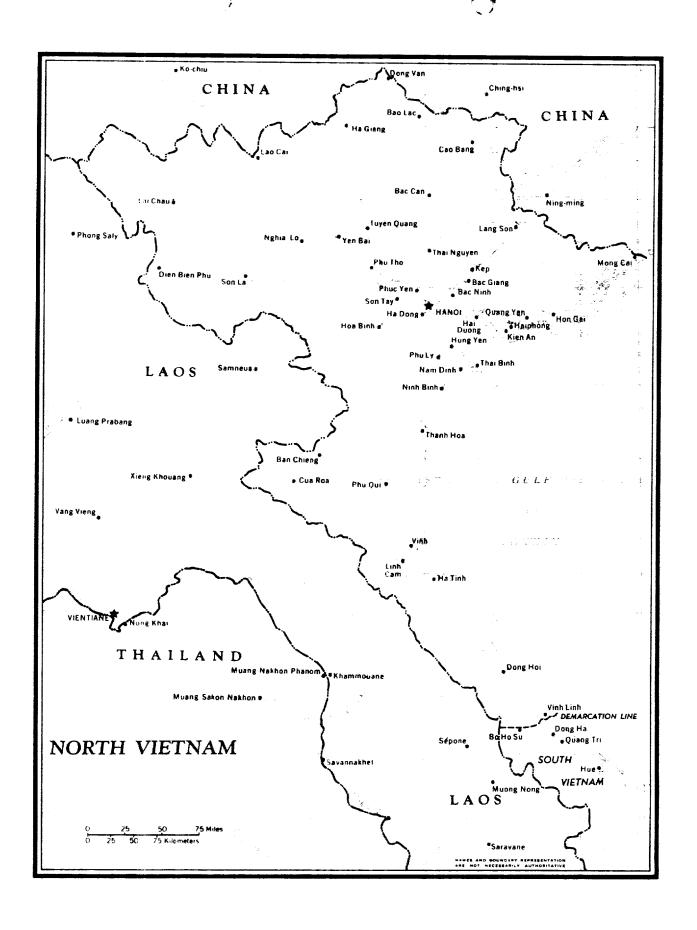
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## V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- According to Hanoi news broadcasts, Vietnamese participation in the 23rd Soviet Party Congress includes a delegation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. The appearance of this delegation, in the face of Chinese opposition to the congress, indicates Hanoi's The Front has never close control over the Front. before formally attended a major Communist event such as a foreign party congress, and the publicity and prestige of attending such a gathering promotes the Front's image among the world's Communists. This may, however, be viewed by some non-Communists as disproof of the Front's contention that it is a non-Communist political organization with only minority Communist participation.
- 2. The Front delegation is headed by Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, a member of the Front central committee and a frequent Front delegate to international meetings. According to press accounts, the delegation arrived on 25 March (two days ahead of Le Duan) and includes the permanent Front representatives to Moscow and Algiers, both of whom are members of the Front's central committee.

Their presence in Hanoi suggests that they participated in North Vietnam's general review of foreign relations which has been going on since January.

Peking is carefully avoiding any display of irritation over North Vietnam's attendance at the Moscow Soviet Party Congress. NCNA announced on 27 March that the Vietnamese delegation to the Moscow gathering headed by Le Duan, which stopped off in Peking from 22 to 25 March, had held "intimate talks" with Chinese officials "in an atmosphere permeated with fraternal friendship." The Chinese appeared anxious to dispel any impression that the delegation had received a "cool reception" The NCNA broadcast emphasized that Premier Chou En-lai had been at the airport to welcome and see off the delegation, and that festivities honoring the Vietnamese had been attended by senior Chinese leaders. V-128 March 1966

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